



Now More than Ever...Learn to Be Good Bereans

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*And this I pray, that your love may abound more and more [displaying itself in greater depth] in **real knowledge and in practical insight**, so that you may learn to recognize and treasure what is excellent [identifying the best, and distinguishing moral differences], and **that you may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ [actually living lives that lead others away from sin];***

Philippians 1:9-10 AMP online

In these times of increasing complexity and danger, in an “information age” when there is a plethora of misinformation and disinformation, and duplicity (appearing to be one thing, but actually the opposite) we were warned of the need to be deep in the Word, to be mature:

...until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, as we mature to the full measure of the stature of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed about by the waves and carried around by every wind of teaching and by the clever cunning of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Christ Himself, who is the head....

Ephesians 4:13-15 Berean Study Bible

In these days in which attention spans have been influenced to be shortened and to expect anything of relevance to fit into a Twitter message, remember that this is NOT true of the Word. It is rich and deep, multi layered...yet consistent from Genesis –*In the Beginning* to Revelation—*The Grace of our Lord Jesus be with you all. May it be so.*

The Word is not like a novel to read once and pass on. It is living and breathing! Another Name for our Messiah is The Word! No matter how many times we read it, when we read it with an open heart and invite the Spirit’s presence, He will take us more deeply into it, though it be foolishness to the natural man. The simple truth can be stated shortly: Jesus loves me, this I know for the Bible tells me so; but as we mature in faith and face much in this life, there is much more to bring us to a mature understanding of how to apply what we learn.

There is also a difference between devotional reading and study reading. For me, the first often leads to the second! Sometimes we are just listening, as we read, for what our Father wants us to know, and sometimes we are led to dig more deeply to fully comprehend what has been provided.

We must also guard against strange interpretations and twistings. We were warned how difficult the words of Paul can be:

Consider also that our Lord's patience brings salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom God gave him. [He writes this way in all his letters, speaking in them about such matters. Some parts of his letters are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.](#) Therefore, beloved, since you already know these things, be on your guard so that you will not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure standing....

2 Peter 3:15-17 Berean Study Bible

So, what DID Paul write that gets twisted? For one example, study how He walked, what calendar of Feast Days he kept, how He honored Messiah AND the Father. Consider from Scripture references, who were the "unstable and ignorant" people Paul was referring to in his day? Who would they be today? Then consider what is taught as the way we should walk today; for example, how these things Paul did have been considered invalid or unnecessary.

Study and do your best to present yourself to God approved, a workman [tested by trial] who has no reason to be ashamed, accurately handling and skillfully teaching the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15 AMP

A major question that recurs is how on earth we have so many different denominations with different doctrines all coming from the same Word. It seems that like the story of the blind men and the elephant, each may well have a good grasp on a certain portion of it, and then emphasize that above the overall comprehension. Difficulty here is that partial truth is still untruth and too often unbalanced.

Part of it is that many do not know how to study the Word. They may also study it in their own language and think that is adequate. Although the main message is conveyed very well in most languages, when it comes to specific interpretations and understandings, it quickly becomes obvious that there is always a loss of understanding in some way from one language to another. Each translator, how matter how well intentioned, is faced with a range of words that can be used in each context. Their own beliefs based on their own background can and does influence how they translate. An easy way to verify this is to check a specific word in Hebrew, and then look to see how many different words are used to translate it...easy to see in the online Blue Letter Bible program. In our SAM community, we reach each week's portion for study out loud, by turns in each person's Bible. The different ways words are translated has also been a part of our seeing the larger and more full understanding intended. It is NOT that one is right, and all the others are wrong, but more so that each carries nuances of the whole.

Strong's Concordance is an awesome tool that was gathered prior to computers yet numbered every word in the Bible to help link to both the Hebrew and Greek words underlying. It is easy to use and well accepted in western lands. It is not typically used by those who are more keenly interested in the Hebraic foundation of the Word as other tools are often more broadly and contextually centered.

Context, Context, Context! This is a regular cry among Bible teachers, yet they do not take it consistently all the way through. It is not enough to just look at the verses around a verse but expand your sense of the context by all that surrounds it. Back up even more for the larger view: The chapter, the overall theme and message of the entire Word, thematic study, from the Beginning/Genesis through to the End/Revelation. It must all fit consistently, or the interpretation is in error. It must also uphold the character and nature of our God as being good. If it doesn't, it isn't correct. Search further! It is such an amazing blessing to pray and search when the light dawns!

Not just the meanings of words but the meanings of words within the context of the times and culture, considering how the same Word is used throughout the Text. A word used in old English often does not have the same connotation given it today. Colloquial, or common use, as in perhaps street language is not so ancient but just as different. It wasn't that long ago that to be "gay" meant that someone was happy. And I learned in recent years that in the south, saying someone was a "real mess" may mean that they are terribly funny, as opposed to my northern interpretation meaning that they are in need of help! There are regional uses, "colloquial uses" or idioms, and "Semantic drift," all of which are normal for all languages in normal living use over time. Bible dictionaries, such as **Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testaments** can help with this matter, but even more thorough might be **Thayer's Lexicon for Greek**, and either **Clark's or Klein's Etymological Dictionaries of the Hebrew Language**. **The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament** is also very helpful for additional insights and highly regarded.

Those who study the Word know that they shouldn't make an entire doctrine based on one verse, yet too often this is done anyway. Another unbalanced way to study is to "cherry pick" certain verses that seem to corroborate what one wants them to mean. In each case, a discerning student will look at the full context of each example and determine if they really ARE addressing related concepts.

Finally, in this brief commentary on the issue, if we think that two things in the Word contradict each other, look at the full context. Sometimes they are like the two wings of the bird of truth as Tozer described. Rather than think we have found an error in the Word, consider instead that we are missing a piece of information that would tie them together.

There is a double-edged sword here: those who teach bear an extra burden of accountability to do so accurately before our Elohim/Mighty God—and—each individual is responsible to show themselves approved through their own study of the Word.

...that you may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ [actually living lives that lead others away from sin];

Philippians 1:10 AMP online

We are currently welcoming new people to our weekly studies if you would like to learn more about the study methods we use and teach. Contact us at info@set-apart-ministries.org or (920) 634-2760